

Katros Groves/Citrus Direct
1053 Biltmore Dr NW
Winter Haven, Fl 33881

December 15,, 1999

Dockets Management Branch(HFA-305)
Food and drug Administration
Docket # 97N-0511
5630 Fishers Lane Rm 1061
Rockville, Md 20857

Dear Sir: or Ms:

The NACMCF met in Washington in early December concerning "Fresh Squeezed" Orange Juice . I would like to address this issue as a small farm business representative. We have been in the citrus business since 1964 and I am certain there are many other small Citrus business in Florida that have been squeezing the wholesome "fresh squeezed Orange and Grapefruit juice" to serve to our customers since the beginning of the citrus industry. We have never had an incident where anyone has been ill from drinking our juice! We have always taken special precautions in squeezing our juice. We have recently invested our life savings in building an "state of art " juice room to make certain that we have achieved all the safeguards in meeting all government agencies standards. We are confident that we have achieved a "safe" product to serve to our customers. We are going to remain small in order to ensure our quality control . We will produce only 75,000 gallons per year. We have conducted an independent bacteriology test on a routine basis and have achieved a 5-log reduction. Our success in this business is that we sell only the "wholesome fresh juice" that separates us from the other large companies in the industry.

I am certain that the NACMCF has many other concerns that are injurious to the food supply than a product like fresh squeezed orange juice that has shown to be almost non-existent in comparison.

There are cigarettes, oysters, beef products, automobiles, airplanes that kill more people than orange juice? Are we going to ban them.? Surely, there is some common sense in the judgment of the Food Industry experts. As we are concerned to supply the expanding population growth with food lets not destroy the small farmers that are trying to exist. A ban of fresh squeeze orange juice would destroy my business and all my hard work in trying to survive in the last 40 years. It is so ludicrous to ban it. It would be better to allow the smaller farmers be exempt from any pasteurization process.

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There should be more concern by the NACMCF to look at the obvious problem in the contamination of food.... People hygiene. There should be efforts in establishing good hygiene practices in the food industry. There are many people who are employees that do not wash their hands when leaving toilet facilities. Emphasis should be introduced that can sanitize the doors and handles after leaving toilet facilities automatically by infrared lights, etc or some innovative technology. The inspectors spend so much time in enforcing equipment, etc but not the source of contamination... people?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mitch Katros", written over the printed name.

Mitch Katros
KATROS GROVES

cc: Senator Bob Graham
Senator Connie Mack



CITRUS DIRECT / KATROS GROVES

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